WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of accessing a data file in a distributed computing environment, comprising:

from a source site, sending to a client site physical address meta data and routing meta data for one or more logical file blocks of a data file in response to a request from the client site for access to the data file.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing at the source site a data structure comprising physical address meta data and routing meta data for one or more logical file blocks of the requested data file.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the routing meta data comprises one or more node addresses along one or more network routes between the client site and the source site for the one or more logical file blocks of the requested data file.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the routing meta data comprises next hop node addresses from the client site for each of the one or more network routes.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the routing meta data comprises complete path information from the client site to the source site for each of the one or more network routes.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the meta data is sent to the client site in accordance with a routable network protocol.

7. A method of accessing a data file in a distributed computing environment, comprising:

at a client site, selecting one of two or more network routes over which a logical file block of the data file is accessible based upon routing meta data incorporated within a data structure containing file access meta data including physical address meta data.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

at the client site, selecting a network route over which to access the logical file block based upon information relating to one or more transmission characteristics of each of the two or more network routes.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein a network route is selected based upon load characteristics of the two or more network routes.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein a network route is selected based upon physical media characteristics of the two or more network routes.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising accessing the logical file block over the selected network route in accordance with a routable network protocol.

12. A system for accessing a data file in a distributed computing environment, comprising:

a source site file system configured to manage access to one or more logical file blocks of a data file and to send to a client site physical address meta data and routing meta data for the one or more logical file blocks in response to a request from the client site for access to the data file.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the source site file system is configured to store a data structure comprising physical address meta data and routing meta data for one or more logical file blocks of the requested data file.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein the routing meta data comprises one or more node addresses along one or more network routes between the client site and the source site for the one or more logical file blocks of the requested data file.

15. A system for accessing a data file in a distributed computing environment, comprising:

a client site file system configured to select one of two or more network routes over which a logical file block of the data file is accessible based upon routing meta

data incorporated within a data structure containing file access meta data including physical address meta data.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the client site file system is configured to select a network route based upon information relating to one or more transmission characteristics of each of the two or more network routes:

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the client site file system is configured to select a network route based upon load characteristics of the two or more network routes.

18. The system of claim 16, wherein the client site file system is configured to select a network route based upon physical media characteristics of the two or more network routes.

19. A data structure for accessing a data file in a distributed computing environment, comprising:

physical address meta data and routing meta data for one or more logical file blocks of the data file.

20. The data structure of claim 19, wherein the routing meta data comprises one or more node addresses along one or more network routes between a requesting client site and a source site for the one or more logical file blocks of the data file.